

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of an Office Action dated April 6, 2007.

In this response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 11 and have rewritten claims 14, 16, 19, 21, and 23 in independent form. In view of the amendment to claim 1, Applicants have cancelled claim 11 without prejudice or disclaimer in order to permit allowable subject matter to issue without further delay.

In addition, Applicants have amended the claims to place them in a format more conventional for U.S. Patent practice by, *e.g.* replacing the phrase “characterized in that” with “wherein” or “comprising” and removing “such as” and “in particular” clauses from the claims, adding a further dependent claim.

Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue additional subject matter in one or more continuing or reissue applications.

Following entry of these amendments, claims 1-10 and 12-25 are pending in the application.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the PTO’s indication on page 5 of the Office Action, that claims 11-14, 16, and 19-23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the outstanding objections set forth in the Office Action. In this response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 11 and have rewritten claims 14, 16, 19, 21, and 23 in independent form. In view of the amendment to claim 1, claim 11 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants note that the PTO crossed off certain references in the signed/initialed/dated form SB/08 that was returned to Applicants with the last Office Action. Applicants are providing additional copies of the crossed-off references with this response along with a another copy of the form SB/08. Applicants respectfully request that the PTO

consider these references and return a copy of the signed/initialed/dated from SB/08 to Applicants with it's next communication.

Claim Objections

On page 2 of the Office Action, the PTO has objected to claims 11, 14-16, 19, 21, and 23 for certain minor informalities. Applicants submit that the amendments set forth above obviate the PTO's objections in a manner which does not narrow the scope of the claims.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

On page 2 of the Office Action, the PTO has rejected claims 1, 4, 5, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,062,325 to McCauley *et al.* (hereafter "McCauley"). Although Applicants traverse this rejection, in the interest of permitting allowable subject matter to issue without further delay, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 11. In view of this amendment, Applicants submit that the outstanding rejection under §102 is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

On page 3 of the Office Action, the PTO has rejected claims 1-3, 6, 8-10, 15, 17, 18, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 2,366,975 to McChesney (hereafter "McChesney"). Although Applicants traverse this rejection, in the interest of permitting allowable subject matter to issue without further delay, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 11. In view of this amendment, Applicants submit that the outstanding rejection under §103 is now moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

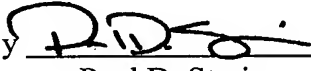
Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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